

THE WINNEBAGO TRIBE

[ETH. CON. 27]

867 168

787 the warpath.² So they say. If you do not become an individual warranted to lead a war party, yet mistaking yourself for one although really an ordinary warrior, you "throw away a man," your act will be considered most disgraceful. A mourner might harm you in revenge for the fact that you have caused him to mourn, and burn you with embers. Your people will all be sad, both on account of your disgrace and on account of the pain inflicted upon you.

787 My son, not with the blessing of one of the spirits merely, nor with
867 the blessing of twenty, for that matter, can you go on the warpath.
776 You must have the blessing of all the spirits above the earth, and of all those on the earth, and of all those who are pierced through the earth;³ of all those under the earth; of all those who are under the water; of all those that are on the sides of the earth, i. e., all the four winds; of the Disease-giver;⁴ of the Sun; of the Daylight;⁵ of the Moon; of the Earth; and of all those who are in control of war powers—with the blessings of all these deities must you be provided before you can lead a successful war party.

867 My son, if you cast off drowsy⁶ men will be benefited by your deeds.
554 You will be an aid to all your people. If your people honor you, it will be good. And they will like you even the more if you obtain a

721 ¹ Among the Winnebago any individual who has been blessed with the necessary powers to lead a
787 warpath may do so, but it is absolutely essential that his blessing deriving him to of such a nature that
701 every possible contingency is included therein. Such complete blessings are, of course, not common nor
686 can they be obtained except through unusual exertions. If you are blessed with just the ordinary or
[620] incomplete war powers and you nevertheless undertake to lead a war party, you may either be defeated
or perhaps only partially successful, and, what is worse, you may lose some of the warriors who started
with you. Your recklessness has thus caused the death of some of your fellow tribesmen. It is under-
stood that every warrior before starting on the warpath turns his "blessing" over to the chief of the tribe
for acceptance, and if the chief considers it complete the warrior is not held responsible for the lack of
success or loss of life. If the chief does not consider an individual's blessing sufficient to justify the step he
has in view and forbids the warrior to go, and if the latter nevertheless goes, he forfeits the war he does
not even acknowledge his "blessing" to the chief by writing, and so on, and, therefore, he is held directly responsible
for any mishap on the warpath. The relatives of any individual thus killed may hold the war leader
responsible and demand compensation, or, as is indicated by it, a few hours later, a messenger comes who
has been placed in mourning by the criminal indifference of the war leader's might attack, perhaps kill
him, without being held guilty of any crime. It must of course be understood that such circumstances would
arise only in cases where the warrior has been "blessed" by the chief. That one of the objects
of the old man was to draw the most striking picture of the rewards that would fall to the lot of those who
followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, and, on the other hand, to draw the most lurid picture of the
consequences that would befall those who deviated, no matter in what degree, from the customs sanctioned by
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773 ² According to the Winnebago creation myth, when Earthmaker, the creator of the earth, first began to
776 create man and began creating life the earth on which he was to live was in continual motion, and
nothing that the former could do seemed to be able to stop it. From above he threw down grass, trees,
etc., but all was of no avail. Finally he hit upon the happy expedient of passing the earth down to the
four corners by means of four enormous snakes, or, as some say, by means of four mythical animals known
as water spirits. It is to these that the old men are referring here. According to the story, even these were
of no avail, and it was only when he finally placed four mythical beings known as "Island Wights" at
the four corners that the planet stopped spinning. These "Island Wights" were in the identical work
the spirits of the four cardinal points, but they are not to be confused with the four winds mentioned later.

776 ³ A deity conceived of as dwelling on life-giving powers from one half of his body and death-giving powers
from the other half. He is also supposed to disseminate disease. Disease-giver is a literal translation
of the Winnebago word, but this probably does not convey the exact meaning. There seems to be no
parallel to this peculiar deity among the other Siouan tribes or among the Algonquians.

822 ⁴ Daylight or light is conceived of as something different and distinct from the sun.

735 ⁵ That is, if you give away things frequently, especially to poor people.

[RADI]

MINNEKILANESON'S DANCES

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The soldier dance is a hop up and down with both feet and in no particular order, anywhere around the singers. It is held in the open air. 776 614

SOLDIER DANCE SONGS

I

Manap'-ra na'ji'winā.
Soldiers get up.

II

Wap-ni'a' tvaig'i'ji na'ji'a'ni'p.
Something difficult get ready.
(I. e., whenever there is anything difficult to do you must get ready.)

III

Manap'-ra newin'na' hu'ngi'ndra.
Soldiers I am he when they speak of.

IV

Manap'-ra hi'ja' win'na'.
Soldier one I am.
(I. e., I am a soldier, and if there is anything to do I'll do it.)

CEREMONY OF UANDERI

(BENDING CEREMONY)

A dummy is made of grass and dressed with whatever objects the maker wants to get. If he wants a horse he puts a bridle crosswise around the body of the dummy; if he wants clothes, he dresses him up in Indian clothes. Then the man places this dummy anywhere near a gathering, or where he expects a gathering to take place. He sits near it. As soon as any warrior sees the dummy he goes over to it and either kicks or strikes the man who made it, giving him at the same time one of the objects he wanted. Any person may do the same. They may not stop kicking the man until some warrior who had at some time or another cut up an enemy in war cuts up the dummy. Then all stop, and as soon as his bruises permitted him, the man would get up and pick up the gifts brought to him. 735 532

FEAST TO BUFFALO TAIL

A grandfather of mine called Cokoboka fasted at Nceda, Wis. There he was blessed by a young buffalo bull calf belonging to a herd. The calf said, as the herd went by, "Father, keep going in the road; mother, keep going in the road." He meant a warpath instead of the road they were going in. The man was to go on a warpath, from which he would return victorious. 787

They used to make offerings to this tail alone, apart from the war bundle. The braided grass was to be used for smoking. The feast is given in spring after the grass grows up, and in midwinter. Ground corn is boiled in making the feast. 782 778 527

KIRRE WACI AND TUENORONA'S DANCES

There is a pleasure dance called *hi'ye waci* and a dance called *tu'okona'it* (wearing buffalo headdresses). The latter is of Sioux origin. 535 777

Crashing Thunder

* 701 Now all this it would be well for you to obtain. Try to
 * 159 be a leader of men. To become one, however, is very
 867 difficult, the old people used to say. It may happen that
 787 you merely pretend to be a leader of men, that you are but
 [686] a mere warrior in the ranks and yet take it upon yourself to
 lead a war-party and thus cause a needless waste of life,
 that you do what is called "throwing away a life." That
 is the most shameful of all acts. The relatives of the person
 [627] whom you have thus sacrificed would then have the right
 to make you suffer, to torture you with burning embers.
 And then your relatives would have to stand by, sad and
 humiliated. Not with the blessing of one, not with the
 blessings of twenty spirits, can you go on the warpath.
 * 159 For that the blessings of all the spirits are necessary—those
 867 on this earth, those under it and those who lie pinned
 776 through it, the Island Weights; those in the waters and
 787 those on the side of the earth, the winds, all four of them.
 You need the blessings of the spirit who dispenses life from
 one side of his body and death from the other, the bless-
 ings of the Sun, the Moon, the Daylight, and the Earth.
 All these Earthmaker has made controllers of war and by
 all these must you be blessed in order to lead a war-party.
 * 787 My son, if you cast off your dress for many people, that
 * 159 is, if you give to the needy, your people will be benefited
 867 by your deeds. It is good thus to be honored by many
 [135] people. And even more will they honor you if you return
 [554] victorious from the warpath with one of the four limbs, that
 is, one of the four war honors. But if you obtain two, or
 three, or perhaps even four limbs, then all the greater will
 be the honor. Then whenever a war feast is given you will
 receive part of the deer that is boiled, either part of its
 body or part of the head.¹⁸ When on some other occasion,

¹⁸ The meat of a deer at such a feast is given only to great war-
 riors. The head is regarded as the choicest piece.

The Teachings of My Father

the young girls not to maltreat a man. Hope with all your heart that you do not fall into such a predicament. I really mean what I say. 867 884

Do not be haughty with your husband. Do whatever he says. Kindness will be returned to you and he will treat you in the same way as you treat him. 867 593

If you have a child and it is naughty, do not strike it. In olden times when a child was naughty, the parents did not strike it, but instead made the child fast. Then when he is quite hungry he will reflect upon his disobedience. 867 593 858

If you hit the child you will merely be putting more naughtiness in him. It has also been said that mothers should not lecture their children, that they merely make them bad by admonishing them. If your husband scolds them, do not take their part for then they will become bad indeed.

If a stranger makes your children cry, do not speak to the stranger in your children's presence and take their part, If you wish to take the children's part, prevent such a thing from happening and keep your children home, and there at home, take good care of them and think of the best means of letting your children get to know you.

When you are bringing up children, do not imagine you are taking their part if you just speak about loving them. Let them see it for themselves. Let them see what love is by observing you give things away to the poor. Then they will see your good deeds and then they will know whether you have been speaking the truth or not. [935]

Do not show your love for other children so that other people notice it. Love them but let your love for them be different from your love for your own. The children of other people are different from your own and if they were to be taken to some other place they would become estranged from you; they would no longer belong to you.